

have been idealised if it had been altogether invented. Constantine was afraid that he had rashly committed himself and that Maxentius had already secured the favour of the Roman gods. His objective, too, was Rome, still regarded with superstitious dread and reverence throughout the world, and revered all the more, no doubt, in proportion as distance lent enchantment to the view. What then more natural than that he should take for granted that, if ever the gods of Rome had interfered in mortal affairs, they would do so now on behalf of Maxentius, who had been raised to empire as Rome's champion ? Constantine was not one of those rarer and choicer spirits, who seek truth for its own sake without regard for material advantage. Conversion in his case did not mean some sudden or even gradual change permanently altering his outlook upon life, and refining and transmuting personal character. It merely meant worshipping at another shrine, entering another temple, reciting another formula. His ruling motive was ambition. He would worship the god who should bring victory to his arms. The intensity of his conviction was to be measured by the extent of his success and by the height to which he carried his fortunes.

But what of the second part of the story—the vision of the cross flaming in the sky in full view of Constantine and his army ? Even those who admit miracles into critical history allow that the evidence for this one is exceedingly inconclusive. We need not doubt that Eusebius related the story just as it was told to him by Constantine, though the Bishop,